GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:611
ANSWERED ON:22.11.2000
INDO-UK TIES
PRABHAT KUMAR SAMANTARAY

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether talks have been held between India and United Kingdom on bilateral issues during the last one year;

(b) if so, the different issues taken up for discussion and the outcome thereof;

(c) further steps being taken by the Government to improve Indo-British relations; and

(d) the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

a) and b) Yes, Sir. India and the UK have held regular discussions on bilateral issues during the last year both at the Ministerial and official levels. The issues discussed include, inter-alia, cooperation in combating terrorism, trade and commerce, cultural cooperation, defence cooperation, consular matters etc. The discussions have allowed the two countries to consider measures for further augmenting mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation.

c) and d) The Governments of India and the UK have adopted several initiatives to further strengthen the bilateral relationship. The modalities of a Joint Working Group for Combating Terrorism and Drug-Trafficking are being finalised by the two sides. A non-governmental forum, the India-UK Round Table has been set up in April 2000, to advise the Governments of India and the UK on ways of strengthening the bilateral relationship. Government have endowed a Chair in Indian History and Culture, in the Oxford University to promote Indian studies in the UK.Both sides have also reiterated their commitment to strengthening bilateral trade and commerce, to achieve a target of Â£5 billion in the next couple of years.